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PM: Anwar created disturbances to avoid trial (HL)

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KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - Sacked Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's aim of inciting disturbances was to avoid having his behaviour exposed in court which could result in him losing his supporters, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

The Prime Minister said he believed Anwar wanted to topple the present Government so that the new Government would not put him on trial, thereby allowing him to walk away a free man.

Dr Mahathir said it was clear that Anwar had tried to use foreigners to incite riots, given the involvement of Indonesians, Pakistanis and Afghans in last Sunday's disturbance.

He said the disturbance was deliberately created to attract the attention of foreign journalists in the country to cover the 16th Commonwealth Games.

Dr Mahathir said Anwar believed that if former Indonesian president Suharto could have been toppled by daily riots, he too could topple democratically-elected leaders the same way.

Dr Mahathir said this in his speech to Wanita Umno members who gathered to celebrate Women's Day.

Also present were his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Wanita chief Datuk Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman, deputy chief Datuk Napsiah Omar and Umno secretary-general Datuk Sabbaruddin Chik.

Dr Mahathir said he knew there were women who simply could not believe the accusations because they thought a man of religion could not behave such. He hoped that his explanation, one which he said was not easy to make, would help them realise the truth and their responsibility to uphold the party and country.

Dr Mahathir also warned them against being deceived by foreign media reports which portrayed Anwar as having large support, adding that some Umno members influenced by such reports believed Anwar was being maligned.

"But those who have heard the explanation now do not support them. Some of them were friends of Anwar," he said.

Later, at a separate function, Dr Mahathir said Anwar would be brought to court for trial and that his followers should stop taking to the streets to protest.

The Prime Minister said Anwar also appeared to have pre-empted the action to be taken against him by claiming that he would not have a fair trial.

"If he is found guilty he can tell everybody that he has not been given a fair trial," he said.

On Anwar's allegations that Minister of Special Functions Tun Daim Zainuddin had taken "a bag load of money" to Switzerland, Dr Mahathir said:

"Well, you think for yourself...if you were to bring a bag load of money to Switzerland, do you carry it and put it on your seat as alleged by Anwar?"

He said if people like Daim had wanted to take a lot of money out of Malaysia, he could just do it by writing a few pieces of paper to transfer it. Dr Mahathir said if Daim had wanted to take a lot of cash out of the country, Daim could have used his (Daim) own plane, instead of using a commercial plane as alleged by Anwar.

"(Only) gullible foreigners will believe it...that he (Daim) carried one

billion dollars next to him. Anwar is the biggest liar there."

He said he had to take immediate action to remove Anwar from office because Anwar was his direct successor. Dr Mahathir said if anything had happened to him (Dr Mahathir), Anwar would be his replacement and such a person was not acceptable as a leader of the country.

"If we have a leader who can be used by foreign powers, our independence is lost," he said at the gathering organised by Wanita Umno.

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